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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 32nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HADID (Algeria)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (continued) (A/48/6, A/48/7, A/48/16 (Parts I and II), A/48/32/Rev.1/Add.1; A/C.5/48/9 and Corr.1 and Add.1, and A/C.5/48/26)

General debate (continued)

1. Mr. NDOBOLI (Uganda) said that his delegation agreed with the views expressed in the general debate on the budget by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

2. Owing to the late issuance of the Advisory Committee's first report, the Fifth Committee would not adequately benefit from that Committee's expert views in its consideration of the budget proposals. Decisive measures must be taken to address the late issuance of documents.

3. The presentation of the programme budget was much improved, although more could be done to simplify the format and improve the precision of narratives, in which regard he supported the views of the Advisory Committee and those of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

4. While his delegation agreed that a number of factors justified the 1 per cent real growth in the budget, the fact that a certain category of programmes of interest to developing countries had not benefited from the growth gave cause for concern. The attempt by some to present zero growth as if it were a rule endorsed by the General Assembly was inappropriate and misleading. Further, the outline, as an instrument of budgeting, was only an indicative forecast and not a limit to be resolutely defended. The ultimate focus, in agreeing on the budget, should be the full implementation of mandated programmes.

5. He endorsed the view of the Secretary-General that the promotion of economic and social progress was essential to democracy and peace, an interrelationship which should be reflected in the balance of the budget for the biennium 1994-1995. In reality the budget proposals contained generous increases for preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping, political affairs, and human rights and humanitarian affairs. Nevertheless, a fair balance could still be reached, and the priorities of the medium-term plan, including those relating to development, respected. Regarding the implementation of mandates relating to programmes on science and technology for development and transnational corporations, further clarification was required of the extent to which General Assembly resolution 47/212 B had been complied with.

6. The overall level of resources proposed for section 15 was not sufficient in view of the increased activities to be carried out by the Economic Commission for Africa. Further, the distribution of resources within section 15 was not satisfactory.

(Mr. Ndoboli, Uganda)

7. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to review the placement of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) under common executive direction and would appreciate clarification of the reporting procedures envisaged under any new arrangement. In that connection, a majority of Member States favoured maintaining the post of Executive Director of Habitat at the under-secretary-general level. Further, he welcomed the assurance that steps were being taken to appoint a new Executive Director of the International Trade Centre.

8. The General Assembly, in its resolution 47/212 B, had welcomed the Secretary-General's intention to consider the relocation of activities in order to sharpen the substantive focus of United Nations programmes and centres, and had requested him to submit proposals in the proposed programme budget for 1994-1995 to reflect the status of the United Nations Centre in Nairobi. His delegation would welcome an explanation concerning the related budget proposals.

9. He welcomed the realization that there was now a need for consolidation to enable the Organization to concentrate on the purposes for which it had been created rather than on restructuring. Lastly, his delegation was committed to working towards the adoption by consensus of a budget for the biennium 1994-1995 before the end of the regular session.

10. Mr. KHENE (Algeria) said that his delegation supported the statement by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

11. The late commencement of the budget item was regrettable. In particular, the late issuance of the ACABQ report had added to the Fifth Committee's difficulties in considering the proposed programme budget, the adoption of which in accordance with established budgetary procedure was essential for the sound management of the Organization.

12. Consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 came at a time of profound change and increased importance for the United Nations. The Organization must respond in a balanced manner to peace and security, economic and social development and human rights concerns. It was obvious that additional resources were needed to discharge mandates in those areas. The budget, above all, represented the vehicle whereby the Secretariat translated into practice the wishes of Member States.

13. The new budget format was intended to ensure greater transparency, optimum utilization of resources and greater flexibility. Further refinement was necessary, particularly regarding extrabudgetary resources and the link between the two categories of funding. His delegation reaffirmed its preference for the funding of certain programmes, particularly development-related, from extrabudgetary resources.

14. Although the proposed programme budget was larger than the revised appropriations for the previous biennium, it was small in relation to the increased level of activities. The 1 per cent real growth was fully justified. Programmes should not be circumscribed by an arbitrary limit on resource growth.

(Mr. Khene, Algeria)

The General Assembly had never endorsed the concept of zero growth, which was founded in dogmatism rather than technical considerations.

15. While the budget proposals reflected positive growth for some important activities, his delegation noted with concern that the economic and development sector would experience negative growth. The activities and resources included under the proposed programme budget must reflect the priorities incorporated by the General Assembly in the medium-term plan, which provided a balanced political framework for the formulation of the budget.

16. The focus on political and peace-keeping issues should not relegate development questions to a lower priority. In reality, however, the development-related activities included in the medium-term plan had not received proper attention. It was essential to balance the interests of all Member States in the programme budget. In particular, the needs of Africa must be properly addressed. The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s should be included under a separate section, particularly since section 15 did not detail projects for Africa. Additional resources should be provided for ECA.

17. Sections 8, 9 and 10 corresponded to the three new departments established in the economic, social and environmental areas in an integrated approach to the various aspects of development. Restructuring must, however, help to improve programme execution in those sectors and not be an end in itself. It was important for there not to be any duplication in the work of the three departments, which must reflect the mandates established by intergovernmental organs. In particular, the insistence that the Department for Development Support and Management Services should focus on transition economies and least developed countries was not justified.

First reading

Part I. Overall policy-making, direction and coordination

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18. The CHAIRMAN said that the total estimates proposed by the Secretary-General amounted to US$ 45,824,200 for part I, US$ 165,757,200 for part II and US$ 53,725,600 for part III. The Advisory Committee had recommended appropriations totalling US$ 36,605,100 for part I, US$ 154,541,600 for part II and US$ 50,844,500 for part III.

19. Mr. TAKASU (Controller), referring to the Advisory Committee recommendation that only 6 new posts should be approved for the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, said that the request for 15 new posts would not result in any duplication, but had been made as a consequence of the expansion in the activities of the United Nations and the increasing demands placed on the Secretary-General and his Executive Office. Of the 15 "new" posts, 10 had

(Mr. Takasu)

already been provided through redeployment. Accordingly, acceptance of the Advisory Committee's recommendation would mean that the Executive Office would have fewer staff than it already had, which would severely hamper its functioning.

20. Contrary to the view of the Advisory Committee, a specific mandate for the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for Public Policy had been provided by the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary. In that regard, ACABQ had recommended certain deletions, and had further recommended that the relevant resources should be included under section 24 (DPI). In fact, given the staffing needed for the many activities performed by the Office of the Special Adviser, which should be maintained as a specific focal point, and the importance of the fiftieth anniversary, acceptance of the ACABQ recommendation would mean that staffing would be overly reduced and activities compromised.

21. With respect to coordination between the United Nations Office at Geneva and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the latter's Chairman served as a focal point in connection with activities of common interest to CSCE and the United Nations. Regarding the matter of United Nations integrated offices, which was still under consideration by the Second Committee, the Secretary-General had temporarily redeployed seven posts, so that if resources were not included in the budget provisions the Secretariat would once again have fewer resources available than it was currently using.

22. Regarding the Advisory Committee's recommendation for a reduction of $300,000 for consultants and experts under section 3 B, the Committee should note that the Secretary-General was seeking to provide not only for currently mandated disarmament activities but also for possible new mandates, given which a request for $1.4 million had been made. In that regard the Secretary-General had not requested an additional appropriation in connection with a series of First Committee resolutions relating to disarmament issues, on the assumption that the request of $1.4 million would be approved. If the Advisory Committee recommendation for a reduction of $300,000 was accepted, the implementation of disarmament activities might well be adversely affected.

23. As a result of the increase in Security Council activities, in particular an increase in the workload of the sanctions committees, the Secretary-General had requested the establishment of an additional six General Service posts. The Advisory Committee recommended approval of only four of those posts, but since the workload of the Council and its Committees had increased further since the original request, the Secretary-General would, in fact, need to request an additional four posts in the form of revised estimates.

24. In connection with section 3C, the Committee would note that Resident Coordinators had often been called upon to assist in electoral monitoring processes and to report thereon to the Secretary-General. In future it was intended to assign a political affairs officer to assist Resident Coordinators in that function. Regarding the D-1 and D-2 posts referred to in paragraphs II.22 and II.23 of the ACABQ report, the number of peace-keeping and

(Mr. Takasu)

preventive diplomacy missions, involving many tasks of a sensitive nature which could be performed only by senior officials, had increased. The D-2 post in question had been provided for some time through redeployment. Also in section 3C, the Committee would note that the work of the Electoral Assistance Unit had increased tremendously, to such an extent that each officer was now dealing with 12 countries. Lastly, under section 4, the Committee should note that the situation room not only played a useful role with regard to peace-keeping operations but also had a vital security function for staff on mission. That was why the Secretary-General had requested that half of the funding should be provided under the regular budget.

25. Mr. STÖCKL (Rapporteur of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) invited members to approve the conclusions and recommendations of CPC relating to sections 1 to 7 of the proposed programme budget, contained in paragraphs 44 to 83 of its report A/48/16 (Part II). With respect to section 1, he drew attention to paragraph 49 of the report, which was relevant to the debate on the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for Public Policy as well as the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. As to section 2, the Committee had been unable to make a recommendation on the question of United Nations integrated offices which, as indicated in paragraph 52, had been taken up by the Second Committee. CPC recommended that the General Assembly should approve the programme narrative of section 3 of the budget, as explained in paragraphs 68 to 73 of its report. Likewise, the Committee recommended approval of section 4, stressing the importance it attached to the safety of United Nations personnel involved in the peace-keeping operations as well as section 7 concerning appropriations for legal activities.

26. Mr. MADDENS (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Union, wished to focus on the budget proposals relating to the Department of Peace-keeping Operations. In the light of the Advisory Committee's first report, he stressed that the examination of the budget should not merely consist in reacting to the Secretary-General's proposals, but should be an opportunity for a critical and in-depth review of the different sections of the budget so as to identify possible ways of reallocating resources. Such an exercise was indispensable if the Organization was to rise to the new challenges and meet the real needs of the international community.

27. He commended the Secretary-General for responding to the increasing number and scale of United Nations peace-keeping operations by strengthening the relevant department, whose activities would, it was to be hoped, become more efficient and streamlined in the process. However, as with other sections of the proposed programme budget, the importance of such activities to the United Nations seemed to have been underestimated. For instance, he regretted the fact that no recommendation based on technical considerations had been made on the criteria used for distinguishing between substantive and support activities. He did not accept the argument that all United Nations peace-keeping activities should be financed from extrabudgetary resources. They should be partially funded by the regular budget so as to demonstrate the importance Member States attached to such high-profile activities. He hoped that the Fifth Committee

(Mr. Maddens, Belgium)

would have an opportunity to take a close look at the use of the support account in the near future and was anxious to hear explanations by the Secretariat and the opinions of the Advisory Committee in that connection. He suggested that the Secretary-General should submit a report to the General Assembly on the establishment and operations of the situation room, which was a vital importance to the Organization. From the operational and political standpoint, the United Nations must have a communication infrastructure that allowed officers in the field to remain in contact with their command. He hoped that the Committee could agree on a package of budget proposals which would help the Secretary-General to run peace-keeping operations in the best possible conditions.

28. Mr. FRANCIS (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, said that his main concern was the recosting employed in the budget. Before making any accurate recosting, consideration of the final performance report for 1992-1993 would be necessary. However, according to his own preliminary calculations, based on the 1992 interim financial statements made available by the Secretariat, the total actual expenditure for 1992-1993 should not exceed $2,378,000,000 - $89 million less than the May 1993 revised estimate of $2,467,000,000. Those calculations reflected higher actual staff vacancy and inflation rates than had been budgeted for; moreover, the estimate of total expenditure for the biennium was still rather high because it did not take account of the appreciation of the United States dollar during 1993. It was unclear whether the actual vacancy rates reflected the detachment of approximately 1,200 Secretariat staff for peace-keeping missions.

29. For the purposes of its discussion on the budget, the Committee would require some of the additional information made available to ACABQ by the Secretariat, in particular the nominal salary figures per post used in the preparation of the budget, as well as information on how such figures were reached and the instructions issued by the Secretariat to programme managers on preparation procedures. While welcoming the efforts of ACABQ to reduce the recosting figures for 1994-1995, he observed that the inflation figures for New York and Geneva used in the ACABQ report remained significantly overstated. Moreover, in the recosting, no allowance had been made for exchange rate variation during the biennium. It was worth while noting that in 1993 the appreciation of the United States dollar had almost entirely offset inflation in the major duty stations. None the less, he agreed that projections which could not be fully substantiated should not be the basis for determining the level of the budget and therefore proposed that recostings should be dealt with retroactively taking into account the performance reports for 1994-1995.

30. He endorsed the recommendations of the Advisory Committee to reduce the estimates for travel, furniture and equipment, but failed to understand the exceptional treatment accorded to the regional commissions, where comparable reductions should also be made.

31. As to the failure to reduce the total number of General Service staff employed in the Organization, despite significant expenditure on modern technology, he did not support the ACABQ recommendation that the freeze on recruitment, particularly of General Service staff, should be lifted. He also

(Mr. Francis, Australia)

expressed concern at the many exceptions to the freeze made by the Secretariat since its introduction. Before lifting the freeze, steps should be taken to ensure proper evaluation of the need for and classification of posts as well as other aspects of recruitment procedure. He considered that the high ratio of General Service to Professional staff applied throughout the Organization, which had not been made clear by the Advisory Committee in its report.

32. He fully endorsed the recommendation contained in paragraph 63 of the report that consideration of the reclassification of 42 posts should be deferred until adequate justification for their reclassification was provided. Although he appreciated the efforts to increase the budgeted vacancy rate for Professional staff, he considered that the Advisory Committee could have gone further, and that the budgeted rates should reflect actual vacancy rates more accurately. He also agreed that the delayed recruitment reductions should reflect actual delays. He suggested they should be 50 per cent for Professional posts and 35 per cent for General Service posts, bearing in mind that some new posts simply involved the transfer of staff from temporary or extrabudgetary posts to established posts.

33. He concurred with the view of the Advisory Committee that consultants should be contracted only for short periods to provide technical expertise not available in the Secretariat, but suggested, since the current appropriation in the budget was too high, that reductions in consultancy costs should be more broadly applied throughout the Organization. The contracts of staff members whose skills or performance could not be brought to the desirable level through retraining should be terminated, but he hoped that such persons would not subsequently be employed as consultants to the United Nations.

34. Since the Advisory Committee could not review its own budget, the Fifth Committee should pay special attention to it, evaluating carefully its work programme for the biennium as well as allowances for travel away from Headquarters. The delegations of Australia, Canada and New Zealand reserved their position on the final level of funding provided for the Advisory Committee pending examination of its work programme. The current review of the United Nations oversight bodies would require careful consideration of the funding provided for the Board of Auditors. He supported the downgrading of the post of Executive Secretary from D-1 to P-5 on the understanding that a proper evaluation of the responsibilities entailed in the post had been conducted. Likewise, he agreed in principle to the creation of new posts in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General but wondered whether it might not be more appropriate to establish a small group of senior deputy secretaries-general to assist the Secretary-General in his work, with the main activities of the Organization being regrouped accordingly. The proposal for a Special Adviser for Public Policy in charge of activities related to the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations was in line with General Assembly decision 47/417, and the level of funding proposed in the budget for secretariat support seemed appropriate.

(Mr. Francis, Australia)

35. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee to delete the posts and consultancy funds for preventive diplomacy and peacemaking and the reasons given for it illustrated that Committee's inconsistent approach to the budget. He stressed the need to provide such resources, in order to comply with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 47/120. The Secretary-General's response was barely adequate, and it was to be hoped that the Secretariat did have the capacity, within overall resources, to respond adequately to the needs of Member States.

36. As to the Director of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, contrary to the ACABQ recommendations, he supported the proposal for an established post, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 44/117 F. Moreover, he would welcome clarifications from the Secretariat as to why the incumbent was stationed in New York. A further example of the Advisory Committee's inconsistent approach was the sizeable reductions proposed in consultancy and expert costs for the Office for Disarmament Affairs. Additional information on the current methods for preparing the Disarmament Yearbook and estimates for expert costs would also be welcome, but, in the meantime, the amounts budgeted by the Secretariat should be approved.

37. In view of the Secretary-General's proposal that the Department of Political Affairs should be headed by one Under-Secretary-General, he suggested that the proposals in the budget for staff increases in the offices of the two Under-Secretaries-General should be reviewed and that the Fifth Committee should be informed of the results. The reason for and scale of the increase in consultants and experts fees for the Department of Political Affairs was not well explained in the budget documents, and clarification of that matter would be welcome. In the meantime, however, the amount proposed in the budget should be retained. He supported the proposal for the transfer of the Office of the United Nations Coordinator of Assistance for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon to the Department of Political Affairs. Furthermore, the arguments given by the Advisory Committee against the additional P-5 post in the Electoral Assistance Unit were not convincing and, subject to additional justification in the form of workload statistics, he was in favour of the new post being retained in the budget.

38. Regarding proposals relating to the situation room, he endorsed the Belgian representative's comments on the Support Account for Peace-keeping Operations. The delegations of Australia, Canada and New Zealand wished to reserve their position on the additional 10 posts proposed for the situation room pending a report on the Support Account, but stressed the importance of adequate staffing and management for the situation room on a 24-hour basis. In conclusion, he welcomed the additional resources provided in the budget to handle the increased workload of the International Court of Justice. However, he wondered whether two additional translation posts proposed would be sufficient to meet the increasing demand.

39. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) questioned the suitability of the procedure currently being followed for examining the budget. The work of the Fifth Committee would have been greatly facilitated if the rationale behind the budget proposals had first been explained and then commented on subsequently by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee. As to Part I of the proposed programme budget, if she had understood the comments made by the Controller correctly, the proposed estimate of $3,649,000 for section 2 could be deleted, since the matter of the United Nations integrated offices had been referred to the Second Committee. Furthermore, as the Controller and the Chairman of the Advisory Committed had indicated, some of the posts proposed under section 1 had already been established and were the results of earlier transfers. She would welcome further information on the nature of those transfers and whether the correct procedures had been applied in the case of transfers between different sections.

40. The estimates for the Advisory Committee were sufficient and her delegation had not altered its position on the importance of the role of that committee with regard to evaluating the budgets of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. As to the Board of Auditors, she endorsed the request by the Advisory Committee for further justification for the need for the reclassification requested. She also endorsed the recommendation made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination in paragraph 48 of its report for the strengthening of the joint CPC/Fifth Committee secretariat unit and would welcome further information from the Secretariat on specific proposals made to meet that concern.

41. Recognizing the important role of the Secretary-General and the wide range of tasks he performed, she failed to understand why in the reports special emphasis had been laid on some tasks rather than others. For instance, little mention had been made of the Secretary-General's contribution to social and economic development and her delegation would be taking up the matter when discussing the relevant draft resolutions. Likewise, she stressed the importance of coordination between the Secretary-General and other principal organs of the United Nations and the need for proper coordination among them in decision-making processes.

42. She questioned the use of references and quotations in general in the budget documentation available and in particular in section 3, relating to political affairs. She objected to the frequent references made to documents issued by the Secretariat and to statements made by the President of the Security Council as the legislative mandate for certain proposals. Furthermore, she did not consider the selective references made to resolutions appropriate. A case in point was paragraph 3.19 of the proposed programme budget, in which mention might also have been made of General Assembly resolution 46/130. Referring to the last sentence of paragraph 3.20, she sought clarification regarding the source of the proposal for extra funding, which to her understanding was not a resolution approved by the General Assembly, but merely a mandate given that very year by the Third Committee. She warned against the tendency to include specific proposals in the budget with a view to securing the subsequent approval of the intergovernmental bodies concerned.

(Mrs. Goicochea, Cuba)

43. Regarding section 3A, her delegation thought that the provision for official travel was too generous. With respect to the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, according to paragraph 3A.13, it had two subcommittees and a working group. However, she was under the impression that the General Assembly had decided in 1991 that the Special Committee should have only one subcommittee. Perhaps the Secretariat could clarify that matter. In addition, she wondered why, among the mandates of the Committee listed in paragraph 3A.14, there was no reference to activities in connection with the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

44. Section 3B placed undue emphasis on the role of the Department of Political Affairs in preventive diplomacy and peacemaking to the detriment of other mandates. Her delegation was not convinced of the need to add posts for preventive diplomacy and would like information on the expected workload for the proposed posts. It also failed to understand the reason for the emphasis on the identification of potential crises. She noted that in paragraph 3B.42, under disarmament subprogramme 4, the Secretary-General proposed to entrust preventive diplomacy functions to the regional disarmament centres.

45. Mr. SHARMA (Nepal) welcomed the Secretary-General's request to convert the P-5 post of the Director of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific to established status. The decision to authorize that post on a temporary basis had been an anomaly in view of the established status conferred at the same time to the posts of director of the centres for the other regions. As representative of the host country of the centre for Asia and the Pacific, he was curious to know what difficulties had led to the stationing of the Director at New York instead of at Kathmandu. The proposed programme budget referred to the Secretary-General's decision to extend the mandates of the regional centres to include preventive diplomacy functions. That topic had been extensively debated in the First Committee during the session, and there was general agreement that the regional centres had a role in promoting regional confidence and security. Because preventive diplomacy was an evolving concept, the centre for Asia and the Pacific was concentrating its efforts on bringing together specialists in strategic studies and government officials to discuss confidence-building measures. A meeting on international arms transfers was scheduled to take place in Kathmandu in January 1994.

46. He wished to assure the Committee that his Government agreed that the substantive activities of the regional centres should be funded from voluntary contributions. However, provision in the budget for administrative costs had greatly advanced efforts to solicit voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations and foundations. As a result, the centre for Asia and the Pacific would soon have its own building, built with the assistance of Japanese non-governmental organizations on a site donated by the Government of Nepal.

47. Mr. SAHID (Morocco) referred to the proposed 15 new posts for the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. The Advisory Committee was not convinced that all of them were needed, while the Controller had said that without them the

(Mr. Sahid, Morocco)

Office's effectiveness would be greatly hampered. Because his delegation considered the activities of that Office very important, it thought that the Secretary-General's proposal should be approved. Since, in the view of the Advisory Committee, there was no specific legislative mandate for the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for Public Policy, it proposed transferring the provision for one D-1 and two General Service posts to section 24 and deleting the remainder of the estimate. As his delegation attached considerable importance to the fiftieth anniversary celebration for which the Office was responsible, it supported the position expressed by the representative of Australia on that issue.

48. Mr. JADMANI (Pakistan) said that new demands on the United Nations made it necessary to enhance the Secretariat's capacity in the policy field. That was why his delegation, like Morocco's, considered the functions of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General very important and thought that its resources should be improved. He had been surprised at the Secretary-General's proposal to downgrade the post of Executive Secretary to the Board of Auditors from the D-1 to the P-5 level, as well as by the Advisory Committee's decision not to approve that action. Like the representatives of Australia and Nepal, he supported the Secretary-General's recommendation to convert the P-5 post of Director of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific to established status. That change would place the Kathmandu centre on an equal footing with those at Lima and Lomé and would make it possible to attract a high-calibre individual for the post of Director. He, too, wondered why the centre's Director had to operate out of New York, as that hampered his work and increased expenses. Finally, with regard to paragraph II.52 of the Advisory Committee's report, he wished to know whether the United Nations was paying rent on facilities for any peace-keeping operations.

49. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba), referring to section 3C of the proposed programme budget and specifically to subprogramme 4, wished to reiterate that activities to enhance the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections could be carried out only with a legislative mandate. General Assembly resolution 46/137 on that subject did not provide for a large electoral assistance unit and stipulated that assistance could be given only at the request of the Member State in question and the competent United Nations organ. In his introductory statement, the Controller had said that, owing to the increase in the number of requests, each staff member was currently responsible for 12 countries. She wondered whether all of the cases contributing to that workload were the result of requests in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/137. With respect to paragraph 3C.37, she noted that, according to the Controller, the resident coordinator was asked to monitor the electoral process when due agreement had been reached and that, in the light of experience, the Secretary-General intended to limit those activities as far as possible. Her country was among the many countries referred to in the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (A/48/16 (Parts I and II)) which believed that those functions should not be entrusted to the resident coordinator, and in that respect, she wished to associate herself with the statement made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77. Lastly, the Secretary-General's intentions seemed inconsistent with

(Mrs. Goicochea, Cuba)

paragraph 3C.38, which spoke of establishing an institutional memory with regard to electoral assistance. Perhaps the Secretariat could comment on that discrepancy.

50. Her delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee's recommendations on section 4. It had serious reservations about proposals to finance certain posts from the regular budget rather than from extrabudgetary resources. Noting the reference in paragraph 4.5 to the enforcement aspect of peace-keeping operations, she said that, pending legislation on that subject, power of enforcement should not be associated with peace-keeping activities. She endorsed what had been said during the general debate on the inclusion of development activities in peace-keeping operations.

51. Mr. ELZIMAITY (Egypt) that the Committee would need to devote considerable time and effort to the question of the 68 additional posts proposed by the Secretary-General. Clearly, the Advisory Committee's recommendations were based on information provided by the Secretariat and had been influenced by the Secretariat's use of the "vacancy pool" and by post movements related to restructuring. Since the Advisory Committee might not have shown sufficient flexibility in some instances, his delegation requested that the same information should be supplied to the Fifth Committee to assist it in its deliberations. With respect to the 15 new posts for the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, his delegation joined with those of Morocco and Pakistan in supporting that proposal, especially since most of the posts would be filled by current staff members. Similarly, it supported the Secretary-General's position regarding the posts for the Office of the Special Adviser for Public Policy.

52. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America), responding to the Controller's statement of the previous day, said that it should come as no surprise that his delegation supported the recommendations of the Advisory Committee. The Controller's blanket rejection of those recommendations represented yet another extraordinary step towards the total destruction of the budget process and control by Member States. His delegation could not agree that the Secretary-General's request were a minimum, since the Secretariat could not substantiate the need for them. One question not adequately addressed in the Controller's statement had been the impact of the large number of regular-budget staff on peace-keeping operations, and his delegation would like to know how many posts were filled by temporary personnel, as well as the actual vacancy rates, taking into account the possible time-lag between the posting of a regular-budget staff member to the field and the hiring of a temporary replacement. That information was essential if the Fifth Committee was to be in a position to approve the revised budget.

53. He noted the Advisory Committee's concern at the additional burden that might be imposed on the Board of Auditors by the growth in the Organization's activities and, in particular, its peace-keeping operations. Although the General Assembly had called for increased expenditure on external auditing during its forty-seventh session, the related provision in the regular budget appeared to represent a slight reduction, and there had been no increase in that respect in the peace-keeping budgets. There seemed to be an understanding,

(Mr. Michalski, United States)

although perhaps unconscious, that the external audit function should be short-funded in order not to expose the Organization's many serious management problems. That was particularly evident with respect to peace-keeping operations, since there was still no external auditor's report on the newer ones.

54. His delegation agreed wholeheartedly with the Advisory Committee's conclusion that there was no legislative mandate for the Office of the Special Adviser and that funding for it should be deleted.

55. Regarding chapter II of the ACABQ report, his delegation would appreciate some indication of when the report on the activities of the regional disarmament centres would be available, because without that report it would have difficulty approving more funding for them. It agreed with the Advisory Committee that a workload analysis of the Electoral Assistance Unit should be undertaken. However, his delegation was surprised that ACABQ had not made similar recommendations with respect to other areas of the budget in which there was obvious overstaffing and urged the General Assembly to mandate a workload analysis of the entire Secretariat for 1994.

56. His delegation was pleased to note that all meetings of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space now took place in Vienna and hoped that the same was true of meetings of its Legal Subcommittee.

57. With respect to the adequacy or inadequacy of regular budget funding for peace-keeping operations, in the absence of the very necessary report on those activities, his delegation was not in a position to consider the matter. Finally, regarding the budget request for the International Court of Justice based on increased workload, it would like information on the number of cases before the Court for each of the past five years.

58. Mr. RAE (India) said that, on the whole, his delegation agreed with the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee, but that it did have slightly different views on some issues. For instance, with regard to the Board of Auditors, his delegation believed that it would need increased resources to enable it to cover peace-keeping operations and regretted the stagnation, even decline, of its financing in past years. His delegation would welcome clarification on the division of responsibility between the two Assistant Secretaries-General in the Department of Political Affairs. It supported the proposed reclassification of the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs from the D-1 to the D-2 level for substantive reasons but would reluctantly accept the Advisory Committee's decision to defer a recommendation on the proposal.

59. More generally, the ratio of General Service staff to Professional staff must be looked at, especially in the light of the increased use of computer technology. In paragraph II.49 of its report, the Advisory Committee addressed

(Mr. Rae, India)

itself to the question of greater standardization of supplies for peace-keeping operations. While standardization was desirable, his delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that it was essential to take into consideration the specific circumstances of each operation.

60. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) said that in paragraphs 13, 17 and 18 of its report, the Advisory Committee had described two areas in which it had had problems understanding the justification for the Secretary-General's proposals. If the Fifth Committee was to be able to resolve the uncertainties to which the Advisory Committee had drawn attention, it would need to be provided with the same information that had been submitted to the Advisory Committee and any other information substantiating the existence of an adequate legislative mandate for the Secretary-General's proposals.

61. Mr. GJESDAHL (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the Nordic countries were firm supporters of United Nations activities concerning preventive diplomacy and peacemaking, for which there was an increased demand. They therefore welcomed the proposal in section 3B of the proposed programme budget for strengthening the Department of Political Affairs and were concerned that the cuts recommended by the Advisory Committee might not prove cost-effective given the alternatives to preventive diplomacy and peacemaking.

62. The Nordic countries noted the Advisory Committee's suggestion to clarify the concept and criteria for United Nations electoral assistance in relation to resource requirements and would welcome such clarification, taking into account, among other things, the mandates relating to electoral assistance.

63. Since there were greater demands on Headquarters to direct and support peace-keeping operations, they welcomed the Secretary-General's proposals to strengthen the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and integrate the Field Operations Division into the Department. Both of those initiatives were based on General Assembly resolutions and the Nordic countries would like to recall that the Fourth Committee had adopted, at the current session, two resolutions on peace-keeping under agenda item 87 which would require an enhancement of the Secretariat's capacity in that field. The increased core funding for the Department under the regular budget that was proposed seemed to be a minimum for ensuring an effective and efficient management of peace-keeping operations. While the Nordic countries agreed that efficiency in some areas could be improved, they did not believe that all the Advisory Committee's proposals for budget cuts adequately reflected the priority now attached to peace-keeping activities.

64. The Nordic countries considered that the resource requirements set out in the Secretary-General's report on the Support Account for Peace-keeping Operations (A/48/470) should be considered in the light of the proposals in the regular budget and they looked forward to receiving the Advisory Committee's report on the requirements.

65. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) asked when the United Nations telephone directory and staff list would be updated.

66. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said that, in its consideration of the proposed programme budget, the Committee should base itself on the report of the Advisory Committee. The first concern should be to determine whether there was a legislative mandate for the Secretary-General's proposals.

67. The second concern was that all mandated activities should be fully funded at the programme budget level. Much had been said about priorities. His delegation agreed with the view of the Controller that priorities did not necessarily mean increased resources at every stage of the exercise. It did not agree with the idea that priorities were goals to be achieved within the period 1992-1997. In that connection, he drew attention to the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, which defined a priority as a preferential rating for the allocation of limited resources.

68. With regard to the Advisory Committee's proposal on the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the General Assembly must decide whether it wished to endorse the Secretary-General's proposal to create a self-sufficient executive office or whether to continue as before. The Secretary-General's proposal might insulate him from the heads of substantive departments, which would be unfortunate since their expertise was most valuable.

69. He commended the Advisory Committee for pointing out where mandates had not been observed. The Fifth Committee must be able to rely on the Advisory Committee to advise it on the proper allocation of resources to the Secretariat so that it could carry out mandated activities.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.